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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 OES-07 AID-05 IO-13 /105 W
----------114519 260339Z /12
R 241949Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4355
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 755

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR EFIS NS GY
SUBJ: SURINAM-GUYANA SITUATION COOLS DOWN

1. DURING RECENTLY COMPLETED VISIT OF GEORGETOWN DCM DWYER, BOTH DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HEINEMANN AND GUYANESE AMBASSADOR SAUL CONFIRMED THAT, EXCEPT FOR FISHING, CONDITIONS ON CORANTIJN RIVER HAVE QUIETLY BEEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. TRAVEL ON THE RIVER BY GUYANESE IS TAKING PLACE, WITH THE ONLY CONDITION BEING THAT SURINAM AUTHORITIES ARE NOTIFIED WHEN THERE IS AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF BOATS TRAVELING TOGETHER. FLOATING SHOPS HAVE RESUMED THEIR BUSINESS. SURINAM AUTHORITIES ARE NOT INTERFERING WITH THESE ACTIVITIES. AS TO FISHING, FOR WHICH LICENSES ARE REQUIRED, THE GUYANESE ARE NOT DOING IT AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS.

2. SURINAMERS SEEM TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE BEING REASONABLE
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AND THAT THEY HAVE RELAXED ALL LIMITATIONS PREVIOUSLY PLACED ON GUYANESE USE OF THE RIVER EXCEPT FOR FISHING LICENSES, WHICH REMAIN TIED TO THE RELEASE OF THE CONFISCATED SURINAM SHRIMP TRAWLER SUGAM 26. WHILE NONE OF THE CONTACTS TALKED WITH WOULD SAY DEFINITELY THAT A SETTLEMENT OF THE SUGAM-FISHING LICENSE DISPUTE IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE, THEY INDICATED THAT BOTH SIDES ARE READY TO MAKE

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THAT DEAL, THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM BEING WHICH ONE WILL TRUST
THE OTHER AND GO AHEAD AND MAKE HIS MOVE WITHOUT SOME KIND
OF CAST-IRON COMMITMENT THAT THE COUNTER-MOVE WILL FOLLOW
AT ONCE.

3. ATTITUDES EVIDENT HERE MATCH THOSE OBSERVED IN NICKERIE
DISTRICT ALONG SURINAM'S WESTERN BOARDER LAST WEEK WHEN
EMBOFF FOUND THAT LOCAL LEADERS THERE SEEMED LESS CONCERNED
ABOUT PROBLEMS INVOLVING GUYANESE (THEY IN FACT REGARD THEM
AS ESSENTIAL LABOR, A PLUS FOR BUSINESS, AND IN MANY
CASES EVEN FAMILY MEMBERS OR CLOSE FRIENDS) AND UNWORRIED ABOUT
ANY ARMED CONFLICT OR PROVOCATION INITIATED BY THE GUYANESE.

4. COMMENT: THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT OF A SHIFT IN
AT LEAST UNOFFICIAL SURINAM THINKING FROM FEARS AT THE TIME
OF GUYANA'S PROTEST NOTE TO SURINAM (APRIL 14) THAT BURNHAM
WANTED TO STIR UP TROUBLE WITH SURINAM FOR DOMESTIC
POLITICAL REASONS AS A DIVERSION FROM THE SERIOUS PROBLEM
HIS GOVERNMENT FACES IN GUYANA TO A TENTATIVE CONSENSUS
THAT HE IN FACT HAS NOTHING MORE TO GAIN POLITICALLY OUT
OF THE AFFAIR AND SHOULD NOW MOVE TO A SOLUTION OF THE
IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE TWO COUNTRIES. WHETHER THIS
IS AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
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